



# Heartland Community College 2024 Democratic Engagement Action Plan

Updated Fall 2023

Submitted by Sarah Diel-Hunt, Vice President, Enrollment & Student Services

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This nonpartisan democratic engagement action plan was developed by Heartland Community College in Illinois for the 2024 election. The purpose of this action plan is to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter registration, education, and turnout in the 2024 general election. The goals for Heartland Community College for the 2024 election are:

1. Goal: Increase student voter information and engagement events hosted by diverse student clubs and organizations.
2. Goal: Increase student voter registration rate to 80% in 2024 (increase of 2.5% from 2020).
3. Goal: Increase student voter turnout rate to 65% in 2024 (increase of 6.7% from 2020).

## LEADERSHIP

Heartland's Democratic Engagement team has expanded to include a more diverse range of voices including student identity groups.

Our leadership team includes the following:

Sarah Diel-Hunt, Vice President Enrollment and Student Services  
Danny Mathews, Director, Student Engagement  
Sarah Tipton, Associate Director, Student Engagement  
Chandler Huffman, Coordinator, Student Engagement

Other Heartland students and staff assisting the leadership team include:

Gena Glover, Associate Director, Community Engagement  
Karla Huffman, Faculty Coordinator, Civic Engagement  
Paul Folger, Faculty Advisor, Political Science Club  
Max Reichs, Director, Student Leaders in Community Engagement  
Andrea Merkle, Student Trustee  
Heartland Community College Black Student Union  
Heartland Community College PRIDE Student Club  
Heartland Community College Association of Latin American Students  
Heartland Community College Global Student Union

Our community, state, and national partners include the following:

Illinois State University  
Illinois State University Office of Civic Engagement  
Illinois Wesleyan University  
McLean County Cultural Leadership Program  
Western Avenue Community Center  
Boys and Girls Club of Bloomington Normal  
League of Women Voters McLean County  
WGLT, National Public Radio Affiliate  
Project Oz  
Big Brothers/Big Sisters  
Bloomington-Normal YMCA  
YWCA of McLean County  
YouthBuild  
NAACP  
Prairie Pride Coalition  
Home Sweet Home Mission  
Bloomington-Normal Economic Development Council  
5 Greater Livingston County Economic Development Council Logan County Economic  
Development Partnership/Greater Peoria Economic Development Council  
McLean County Chamber of Commerce  
Pontiac Area Chamber of Commerce  
BNAdvantage  
Career Link – Region 15  
GLK Workforce Development Board – Region 11  
Land of Lincoln Workforce Alliance – Region 20  
Campus Compact ALL IN  
Campus Democracy Challenge ALL IN  
President Commitment ASK EVERY STUDENT Commitment Campus  
Women of Enlightenment Chapter of the National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs, Inc.  
Normal Mayor, Chris Koos, and Normal Town Council members  
Bloomington Mayor Mboka Mwilambwe and Bloomington City Council  
McLean County Board  
Illinois State House Representative Sharon Chung  
Illinois State Senator David Koehler

## **LEADERSHIP SUSTAINABILITY**

To maintain the College’s commitment to Civic engagement and voting efforts, leadership position descriptions list Democratic Engagement and voting efforts as required responsibilities, ensuring that the commitment continues with the position rather than the person holding the position.

## **COMMITMENT**

Heartland Community College has been a signatory to the Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation since 2020.

Heartland’s commitment to civic engagement is evident throughout its Strategic Plan (College-Wide Priorities and Goals) as well as in its college learning outcomes (Essential Competencies) that are assessed in both the curriculum and the co-curriculum.

## **College-Wide Priorities & Goals**

### Promote Student Access and Success

- Increase percentage of students progressing toward and completing their educational and career goals
- Increase undergraduate enrollments in areas identified in the College's Strategic Enrollment Management Plan
- Reduce opportunity gaps and achievement gaps among student populations
- Improve student satisfaction
- Increase student achievement of the College's Essential Competencies

### Create and Model a Systemic Culture of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

- Reduce barriers to access and equity
- Model anti-racist practices within and beyond the College community
- Increase the percentage of employees and students participating in EDI oriented professional development, social awareness, and community engagement opportunities.

### Ensure Resource Stewardship

- Improve employee satisfaction
- Fulfill institutional need for diverse recruiting, hiring, retention, and advancement
- Maintain or increase the College's financial health
- Maintain or increase value of the College's physical assets

### Serve as a Community Resource

- Meet emerging workforce needs through education and training programs
- Fulfill unmet community demand for personal enrichment and professional learning
- Establish and sustain diverse community partnerships to share resources and build reciprocal support networks

### Model Effective Communication, Collaboration and Transparency

- Intentionally obtain and incorporate employee input
- Improve internal dissemination of information
- Share resources, responsibilities, and results to achieve college-wide goals

## **Heartland Community College Essential Competencies**

**Communication:** Students develop and present an effective message using various modalities suitable to the topic, purpose, and audience.

**Problem Solving/Critical Thinking:** Students identify and interpret problems to engage in thinking that is informed by evidence; or students apply strategies and procedures to arrive at a workable solution.

**Diversity:** Students recognize their own attitudes and values as well as those of others and demonstrate respect for others with diverse perspectives, behaviors, and identities.

**Social Responsibility:** Students ethically engage with or respond to academic, civic, social, environmental, technological, or economic challenges at local, national, or global levels.

**Technology:** Students appropriately use technology to solve problems, complete tasks, or accomplish goals; or students demonstrate effective adaptability to various technologies.

## LANDSCAPE

Heartland Community College is a public community college and joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in 2018.

Our campus demographic and voting data:

Heartland Community College has 4,795 students and is a commuter campus. Average age is 22; Minority enrollment is 34%; First-generation enrollment is 18%; 55% of students are part-time; 79% live in Heartland's District; 18% are out of District, with 1% out of State and 1% out of Country.

This demographic data informs our voting efforts by allowing us to meet students where they are. For example, to reach part-time students, we must bring our voting and civic engagement efforts to the classroom (in-person and online) rather than depending solely on tabling or voting events in which part-time students can only sometimes participate.

Heartland Community College has authorized NSLVE from 2020 but has not received 2022 data at the time this Action Plan was created. 2024 goals, therefore, are based on 2020 general election data.

Our institution had a 2020 campus voting rate of 58.3%.

Our institution had a 2020 voter registration rate of 77.5%.

Our institution had a 2018 voter turnout rate of 33.3%.

Our institution had a 2018 voter registration rate of 65.3%.

Our institution has been recognized in the past by ALL IN for these awards: 2020 IL Campus Voting Challenge: Most Improved Voter Turnout - 2-year Award

Our institution has been recognized by ALL IN with the following seals: 2018 Silver, 2020 Bronze

## STATE OF ILLINOIS VOTING UPDATES

In accordance with a new State of Illinois Law, Heartland Community College plans civic engagement and voting events around a 2023 bill providing that the date of the general election on the first Tuesday after the first Monday of November in even years shall be a State holiday known as General Election Day and shall be observed throughout the State.

## GOALS (Strategic, Measurable, Ambitious, Realistic, Time-bound, Inclusive & Equitable)

Our campus democratic engagement goals are as follows:

### Voting Goals

1. Increase student voter information and engagement events hosted by diverse student clubs and organizations.
2. Increase student voter registration rate to 80% in 2024 (increase of 2.5% from 2020).
3. Increase student voter turnout rate to 65% in 2024 (increase of 6.7% from 2020).
4. Ensure a continued commitment from Heartland President Keith Cornille to supporting full student voter participation.

## Long Term Goals

Beyond 2024, Heartland Community College is committed to the following:

1. Ask every student to participate and strive for 100% student voter participation for eligible students.
2. Earn an ALL IN Highly Established Action Plan Seal of recognition.
3. Earn a Gold, Platinum, and Diamond Seal of recognition from ALL IN.
4. Increase faculty participation for in-class voting efforts and democratic engagement promotion.

## STRATEGIES

Heartland Community College will implement these strategies and programs to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter participation.

1. Voter Registration Initiative: In 2024, HCC will participate in the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge and National Voter Registration Day. Tabling events, class announcements, posters, social media, and partnerships with League of Women Voters Mclean County and Illinois State University will be used to encourage students to take the ALL IN Challenge, register to vote, and vote.
2. NSLVE Democratic Data: In 2022, Heartland Community College added race/ethnicity, and gender to our National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) enrollment submission files. When the 2022 NSLVE data is available, we will study the demographic data and use it to set specific goals and inform future strategies to close participation gaps that may exist.
3. Constitution Week: Student Leaders in Community Engagement (SLiCE) and the Political Science Club will co-host a tabling event for Constitution Week to help students learn about the Constitution, reflect on current Constitutional issues, and consider implications for democratic engagement around those issues. Tables placed around campus will contain a Constitutional reflection prompt and large sheets of paper for students to share their answers or comments. Prompts include information and questions around abortion rights, gun control, education, election process and more. A virtual component is available through the online tool Padlet to encourage digital engagement as well. SLiCE student members will monitor the tables and change out the paper as needed. The Political Science Club will collect the responses and discuss them during their general meeting.
4. Talking Politics: SLiCE will host Talking Politics, a panel discussion about the history and interpretations of the United States Constitution surrounding the prompts selected for Constitution Week (see above). Panelists will provide thoughts on each question from their perspective with time afforded for students to ask questions and provide their own insights. This is an annual event that takes place during Constitution Week.

5. **Bagels and Ballots:** Student Government Association and Student Leaders in Community Engagement will partner with League of Women Voters of McLean County to provide a voter information workshop called Bagels & Ballots. The workshop aims to inform students about the issues and candidates on their ballot for this upcoming midterm election by utilizing LWV's online tool VOTE411.
6. **Mock Election Table:** Hosted by Heartland's Political Science Club, the Mock Election program is a tabling event aimed to inform Heartland Students on who is on the ballot for Governor of Illinois. Included on the table are mock ballots to help the Political Science Club determine how Heartland students vote.
7. **Election Night Viewing Party:** HCC's Political Science Club and the Student Government Association plan to host an Election Night Watch Party where students and staff are encouraged to bring family and friends to enjoy an evening of food, guest speakers, and peer discussion.
8. **Boxes and Walls:** Boxes and Walls is an educational event designed to raise awareness about what some students experience getting to, and in college. The goal is to plant seeds of openness, understanding and respect for oppressed and marginalized groups.
9. **Ask Every Student:** HCC is registered as an Ask Every Student Commitment Campus in which we will incorporate and implement voter registration practices into our existing strategies.
10. **Campus Compact Partner:** Heartland Community College is a part of Campus Compact, a national coalition of over 1000+ colleges and universities committed to the public purposes of higher education. Heartland utilizes Campus Compact's resources, professional development events, and programming to assist our efforts in building democracy through civic education and community development.
11. **Faculty Academy I:** Faculty Academy I is a professional development onboarding institute for all new faculty and emphasizes the college's value of civic engagement and service-learning. Faculty are introduced to campus voting efforts, and civic-learning opportunities and resources, and instruction on incorporating learning outcomes into service-learning and civic engagement projects.
12. **Civic-Learning and Voter Engagement Curriculum Efforts:** Resources on how faculty can incorporate civic-learning and voter engagement efforts into course curriculum will be shared through the Faculty Coordinator of Civic Engagement. Resources will include activities, assignments, and assessment ideas and will be communicated in faculty forums, college forums, email, division meetings, and in the faculty SharePoint website.

These resources are available to faculty year-round through website material and the Faculty Coordinator of Civic Engagement.

13. Service-Learning Certification: In the Spring of 2024 Heartland will offer a Service-Learning Certificate course where faculty learn about the benefits of incorporating service-learning into their course curriculum. This is a proven teaching and civic-learning strategy that results in improved mastery of course content, higher retention rates, and overall higher satisfaction with the classroom experience.
14. Political Science Club Podcast: Heartland Community College Political Science Club produces a political podcast, “The Political Spectrum,” approximately three times a semester featuring political figures from different parties, and other organizations and people involved with local politics. In 2024, “The Political Spectrum” will focus on voting efforts in Heartland Community College District 540.
15. Civic Nation Voter Registration Portal: Heartland Community College will use the [voter registration portal](#) granted to Heartland by Civic Nation as a tool to register voters. The College will develop a promotional campaign around the use of this portal including tabling, student email blasts, and global messaging to students through the College’s learning management system, Canvas.

## EVALUATION

We will evaluate our action plan in the following ways:

1. Increase the percentage of students who are registered to vote.  
Measure: National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement (NSLVE) Data
2. Increase the percentage of students who vote (student voter rate).  
Measure: National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement (NSLVE) Data
3. Increase the number of diverse student clubs and organizations that embed a civic engagement activity.  
Measures:
  - a. Supported student organizations event submissions with Student Engagement Office
  - b. Number of HCC-sponsored events with civic engagement tag in Get Involved Platform
  - c. Attendance and participation in the various on-campus student centered events
4. Increase the number of students who participate in non-assessed civic engagement activities, either as part of a course, in the co-curriculum, or externally sponsored.  
Measures:
  - a. Number of HCC-Sponsored events with service/civic engagement tag in Get Involved
  - b. Attendance and participation in the various on-campus student centered events
  - c. Student Perception: CCSSE Data Item 4i [In your experience at this college during the current academic year, about how often have you done the following: Participated in a community-based project (service-learning activity) as part of a regular course? 1 = Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Often, 4 = Very Often]

- d. Student Perception: Institutional Question in CCSSE related to externally sponsored civic engagement activities.
5. Increase the number of faculty who embed civic engagement activities (assessed or non-assessed) into their courses.  
Measures:
    - a. Faculty PD Certificate Completions (leading indicator)
    - b. Survey faculty on a cycle
    - c. Track CE assignments in Canvas (will need time to develop and implement)
  6. Increase the number of courses containing a civic engagement activity (assessed or non-assessed).  
Measures:
    - a. Survey faculty on a cycle
    - b. List of courses promoted on website
  7. Increase the number of community partners represented in curricular and co-curricular civic engagement activities.  
Measures:
    - a. List of community partners included on virtual tracking system event location
    - b. List of community partners benefitting from civic engagement curricular projects
  8. Increase the number of students who complete a formally assessed civic engagement activity, either as part of a course or in the co-curriculum.  
Measures:
    - a. Track civic engagement assignments in Canvas (will need to develop)
    - b. Track students participating in assessed civic engagement co-curricular activities
    - c. Enrollment in SLV 101 course
  9. Increase student achievement of the College's Social Responsibility Essential Competency through civic engagement activities and voter information programs.  
Measures:
    - a. Assessment data collected in the College's LMS from curricular activities
    - b. Assessment data collected from the College's LMS from aligned co-curricular events and activities events

## USE OF EVALUATIONS

The Civic and Voting Engagement team will use evaluation data to determine which strategies, programs, events, etc. are successful and meet the goals of our efforts. Programs that do not meet our measurable goals altered to meet our needs or culled from our programming.

## REPORTING

Our campus action plan will be posted on our campus page on ALL IN's website <https://allinchallenge.org/campuses/heartland-community-college/>.

Our institution has given ALL IN permission to publish our NSLVE reports which are posted on our campus page on ALL IN's website.



HCC's Democratic Engagement plan will first be shared with the College's Service-Learning and Civic Engagement employee team along with Student Government Association, and subsequently Student Senate. It will then be shared with the President's Cabinet. Upon approval, the plan will be shared with key stakeholders within the college and community including faculty, staff, and community partners. Additionally, the plan will be shared with Heartland's Marketing office to be used in marketing efforts when appropriate. Last, highlights from the plan will be placed on the HCC website within the [Service-Learning and Civic Engagement](#) pages.